

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 9-16 are newly presented and are the pending claims.

Priority

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's acknowledgment of the claim for priority and receipt of the priority document.

35 U.S.C. §102

The claims have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Spira et al., U.S. 2002/0035495 A1 (Spira). Applicants have canceled 1-8 without prejudice or disclaimer and have added new claims 9-16, which are patentable over Spira and the remainder of the art of record for the following reasons.

As set forth in claims 9 and 16, the power generation plants remote control and operation system of the invention includes a plurality of start and stop control devices for remote control start and stop operation of the plurality of thermal power generation plants. The number of start and stop

control devices corresponds to the number of thermal power generation plants. Further, each of the start and stop control devices has a control program that sets the start and stop control and operation sequence for the corresponding thermal power generation plant. Accordingly, the power generation plant remote control and operation system of the invention performs centralized remote monitoring and control of a plurality of thermal power generation plants.

The present invention is directed to overcoming the conventional necessity of allocating operators on a one for one basis corresponding to the number of thermal power generation plants to be controlled. This requirement is eliminated by implementing the control and operation with regard to starting and stopping of the respective plants through remote control from a centralized facility, such as a centralized monitoring device that performs centralized monitoring of operation states of the plurality of thermal power generation plants. Since a start and stop control device in which a start and stop operation sequence for each thermal power plant is remotely controlled, the number of operators required for operating the plants can be reduced to

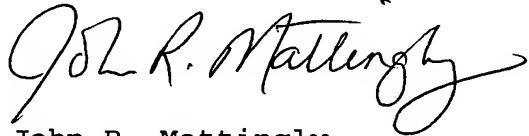
a minimum thereby requiring fewer highly trained and knowledgeable operators while still providing steady state operation of the plants. See page 26, lines 19-24 of the specification, for example.

Spira discloses a maintenance service for thermal power generation plants that includes remote monitoring of the plants by use of communication lines. However, the remote monitoring of the plants does not include remotely controlling the plants, including the starting and stopping operation of a plurality of thermal power generation plants. That is, Spira does not disclose the plurality of start and stop control devices that are claimed by Applicants nor the control program that sets the start and stop control and operation sequence for the thermal power generation plants, as claimed by Applicants. Accordingly, Spira does not anticipate or render obvious the invention as set forth in claims 9-16.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants contend that the above-identified application is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration and reexamination is requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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on October 5 2004, by John R. Mattingly